Science Briefs: Lifelike robot will remember your conversation with her

Lifelike robot remembers meeting, talking with you
The friendly Nadine, a “receptionist” at Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University, will greet you back when you say “hello” – and the next time you meet her, she will recognize you, remember your name and your previous conversation with her.

She has soft skin and flowing brunette hair. She smiles when greeting you, looks you in the eye when talking, and can also shake hands with you. And she is a humanoid.

Unlike conventional robots, Nadine has her own personality, mood and emotions. She can be happy or sad, depending on the conversation.

Nadine is the latest social robot developed by scientists at NTU. The double of its creator, professor Nadia Thalmann, Nadine is powered by intelligent software similar to Apple’s Siri or Microsoft’s Cortana. Nadine could be a personal assistant in offices and homes in the future, as well as a social companion for the young and the elderly.

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Neurosurgeon: Villain’s flub would’ve killed James Bond

James Bond’s nemesis in the most recent film likely failed neuroanatomy, said real-life neurosurgeon and scientist Dr. Michael Cusimano of St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto.

In “Spectre,” Ernst Stavro Blofeld, played by Christoph Waltz, tortured the famed hero using restraints and a head clamp system fused with a robotic drill, intending to first inflict pain and then erase 007’s memory bank of faces.

But Blofeld didn’t quite know his brain anatomy and would’ve probably hit Daniel Craig’s vertebral artery and killed his character instead, said Cusimano.

“Aiming to erase Bond’s memory of faces, the villain correctly identified the lateral fusiform gyrus as an area of the brain responsible for recognizing faces. But in practice, the drill was placed in the wrong area, where it likely would have triggered a stroke or massive hemorrhage.”

Last week, Cusimano, a lifelong fan of the Bond movies, published a commentary on the error in the science journal Nature.

stmichaelshospital.com

Algorithm allows high-quality 3-D scanning via smartphone